



[unavocemaine.org](http://unavocemaine.org)

## NEW TO THE LATIN MASS?

### WELCOME!

Welcome to Mass in the Extraordinary Form (AKA: the Traditional Latin Mass, or TLM). Attending the TLM can be a deeply rich experience, but it can also be overwhelming as you get oriented to a different way of hearing and praying the Mass. Please know that most people attending here were in the same position as you not long ago.

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE TLM

The Catholic Mass (under any form) ultimately traces the roots of its development to the Last Supper and Our Lord's Passion. Over time, different prayers and different rituals have been adopted, but the core has remained constant since the time of Christ. The Latin Mass is sometimes referred to as the *usus antiquior* (the ancient use of the liturgy) or the Tridentine Mass since it became normative in the Roman Church at the Council of Trent (1545-1563).

Today, you will hear the TLM mostly referred to as the Extraordinary Form of the Mass (outside the ordinary), while the Ordinary Form of the Mass (also called the *novus ordo* or "new order") is said in the vernacular (everyday) language, for us that is in English.

The theologians who wrote the *novus ordo* in the 1960s thought about the Mass in a different way than had previously been done, so there are some key differences.

In the *novus ordo*, for example, participation is key, so a lot of emphasis is put on understanding and consciously participating in every aspect of the Mass. In the TLM, however, there is no script for how we are to pray. The emphasis is on the Eucharist as the unbloody sacrifice, with the priest ascending to the altar to offer Jesus' sacrifice to the Father on our behalf. In the TLM, we are witnesses to an amazing miracle taking place on the altar and we are free to speak to God from our hearts however we are moved. Some people follow along with the Missal and pray along with the priest. Some unite their intentions with the priest's sacrifice. Some pray the rosary or speak to God from their hearts. Some just kneel in silence and awe.

## FOLLOWING THE MASS

To help you follow the Mass, there is a red handbook/missal available in the back of the church. It contains the order of the Mass, that is the parts of the Mass that do not change. On the left are the Latin prayers and on the right is the English translation; illustrations and comments help you follow along.

That said, you aren't necessarily expected to hear a lot of the prayers the priest is reciting, as he is addressing them to God on our behalf. The key to following along is to look for liturgical cues. Often these cues are the phrases the priest speaks loud enough for all to hear. For example, when he sings out, "*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*" everyone stands.



Similarly, when he says, "*Dominus vobiscum*" before the Gospel, everyone stands, and when he says, "*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus*" and bells are rung, everyone kneels.

As with the *novus ordo*, there are certain times during the Mass when the congregation sits, stands, or kneels. Strictly speaking, these postures are not a "requirement", but long-established traditions reflecting the understanding that we are each a union of body, mind, and soul, all of which we are dedicating to the Lord.

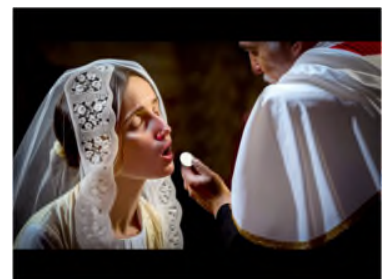
## FOLLOWING THE MISSAL

For those who wish to follow along with the prayers the priest says during the Mass, we offer the following tips:

- Be sure to follow what the priest is saying and doing rather than what the choir is singing. Except for during the *Gloria* and *Credo*, the priest will continue moving forward with the Mass even while the choir is singing. This is most notable at the beginning of Mass where the priest continues to pray while the Introit and *Kyrie* are sung, and at the *Sanctus* where the priest begins the prayers of consecration while the *Sanctus* is being sung.
- Be aware that some parts of the Mass change depending on the day in the liturgical calendar. These are called "propers" and are available on a separate sheet next to the red missals in the narthex. They are the Introit, Collect, Epistle, Gradual, Alleluia, Gospel, Offertory verse, Secret, Preface, Communion verse and Post-Communion prayer. When you get to these parts, do not be thrown off when the representative text in your missal or red book does not match what the priest is saying.
- The pace at which the priest goes through prayers will vary over the course of the Mass. Those prayers that the priest says silently to himself are said very quickly. Those places where there is a call and response go more slowly. There are also points at which the prayers pause, such as while the *Gloria* finishes or during the ablutions after communion when the priest purifies the sacred vessels.

## WE RECEIVE COMMUNION ON THE TONGUE

Many people today are used to receiving communion in the hand, but this is a relatively recent practice. The older practice (and the one that is used in the Latin Mass) is receiving communion on the tongue while kneeling. We kneel as a sign of reverence before Jesus Christ in the Eucharist and we receive on the tongue in order to ensure that no particles (all of which are 100% the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ) are accidentally lost.



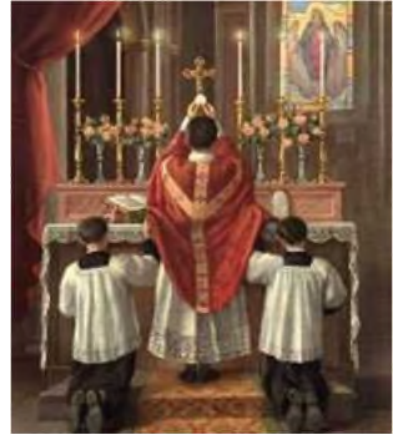
## WHY DO SOME WOMEN WEAR VEILS

You will notice many women wearing veils on their heads. This is a practice that traces back to St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 11, in which he says that men should bare their heads in church and women should veil theirs. These veils are called mantillas or chapel veils. This was a common practice throughout the history of the church, but that did not continue with the *novus ordo*. Please feel free to adopt the practice as a way to be more reverent.

We hope this experience of the Latin Mass leads to a powerful encounter with Jesus Christ. This is an ancient form of the Mass and the way many of the great saints prayed.

*For centuries, Jesus Christ has descended to earth at the words, "Hoc est enim Corpus meum," (This is My Body) and He still does today.*

We hope that, like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, your eyes, too, might be opened today as you recognize Him "in the breaking of the bread."



## QUICK TIPS

- The priest faces the altar when addressing God. The prayers addressed to God are not said so as to be heard by the congregation, so do not feel like you need to strain your ears or understand Latin. The red missal can tell you what the priest is saying.
- While you are welcome to follow along with the text of the Mass in the missal, Mass can also be fruitfully attended by simply watching and praying.
- Unlike in the *novus ordo*, the congregation is not responsible for saying the responses of the Mass. This job belongs to the servers.
- There is no requirement that you either speak or understand Latin in order to attend the Latin Mass.

## CONCLUSION

We hope this introduction will help you feel more at home at the TLM. After a certain amount of preparation, there's a point where the best thing you can do to get acclimated to the TLM is simply to attend. Many people feel that they don't quite "get it" until they've gone to the TLM four or five times, so if you feel the same way, you're not alone. Ultimately, whatever small discomfort is felt at the beginning should eventually pay off.

*Text used by Una Voce Maine with permission from*

*Joe Moreshead, Director of Faith Formation, Parish of the Holy Eucharist.*

*See links to TLM publications & resources at [unavocemaine.org/resources](http://unavocemaine.org/resources)*

*Thank you for your support!*